

## **ECA Highlights Report**

July 23, 2004

ECA Weekly Highlights are organized by the Bureau's response to the Department's Strategic Objectives and by three themes: *ECA Outreach Worldwide*; *Partnerships for Learning: Working Together for the Successor Generation*; and *Program Alumni Magnifying U.S. Public Diplomacy*. The regional breakdown of highlights presented in this report is as follows:

### **AF**

- [\*\*BOND WITH SPECIALIST ENHANCES PROGRAM FOR SENEGALESE ENGLISH TEACHERS\*\*](#)

### **EAP**

- [\*\*AMERICAN FULBRIGHTER FEATURED AT CULTURAL EVENT IN BEIJING\*\*](#)
- [\*\*IV PROGRAM HAS POSITIVE IMPACT ON VIETNAMESE ALUMNA\*\*](#)

### **EUR**

- [\*\*FLEX EXPERIENCE EMPOWERS DISABLED RUSSIAN ALUMNUS\*\*](#)
- [\*\*"AMERICAN ROADSIDE ARCHITECTURE" ATTRACTS YOUNG GREEKS\*\*](#)
- [\*\*U.S. FULBRIGHTER CONTRIBUTES TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION IN KOSOVO\*\*](#)
- [\*\*BLIND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES PROGRAM ALUMNUS CONDUCTS COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY SEMINAR FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED IN VLADIVOSTOK\*\*](#)

### **NEA**

- [\*\*MOROCCAN RESEARCH CENTER HOSTS CONFERENCE ON JEWISH CULTURE\*\*](#)
- [\*\*YOUTH EXCHANGES MAKE NEWS IN U.S. AND ABROAD\*\*](#)

### **SA**

- [\*\*INDIAN MADRASSA IV ALUMNI PARTICIPATE IN IV ALUMNI CONVENTION\*\*](#)
- [\*\*PAKISTAN CELEBRATES 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING\*\*](#)
- [\*\*2004-2005 YES STUDENTS ATTEND KARACHI PRE-DEPARTURE BRIEFING\*\*](#)

### **WHA**

- [\*\*FORMER IV DEFENDS HUMAN RIGHTS IN VENEZUELA\*\*](#)
- [\*\*FULBRIGHTER ELECTED PRESIDENT OF PANAMA'S TOP NEWSPAPER\*\*](#)

## **I. ECA Outreach Worldwide**

### ***Strategic Objective: PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING***

#### **AMERICAN FULBRIGHTER FEATURED AT CULTURAL EVENT IN BEIJING**

American Fulbright student **Eli Marshall**, a composer who recently graduated from the Yale University School of Music, was featured at an evening of American music at the residence of U.S. Ambassador to China **Sandy Randt** on July 10, spotlighting compositions by American composers. A Chinese string quartet and three musicians from the Central Conservatory of Music performed two of Marshall's own compositions. The ambassador addressed the Fulbright Program's contributions to mutual understanding. Guests included high-level Chinese government officials, educators, and cultural figures.

#### **MOROCCAN RESEARCH CENTER HOSTS CONFERENCE ON JEWISH CULTURE**

In an ECA-funded project, the Tangier American Legation Museum (TALM) and the Moroccan branch of the American Institute for Maghrib Studies recently hosted a four-day conference on "Rethinking Jewish Culture and Society in North Africa" comprising presentations by 32 scholars from Algeria, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, and the United States. Following a keynote address from Morocco's Royal Counselor **Andre Azoulay**, who focused on the challenges to tolerance and diversity in today's polarized world, Moroccan writer and intellectual **Edmond El Maleh** spoke. TALM also arranged with the Moroccan Ministry of Culture in Rabat to borrow Sarah Levin's photographic exhibit "Jews Among The Berbers," offering 50 stunning photographs by **Elias Harrus** depicting the daily lives of Jews in Southern Morocco in the 1950s and 1960s.

#### **"AMERICAN ROADSIDE ARCHITECTURE" ATTRACTS YOUNG GREEKS**

On June 18 at the Athinais Cultural Center in Athens, U.S. Ambassador to Greece **Thomas Miller** opened the ECA-sponsored "American Roadside Architecture" photo exhibit, which captures the influence of America's fascination with the automobile on contemporary international trends in art, fashion, and architecture. American architectural historian **John Margolies** detailed how this facet of American popular culture has resulted in sociological and architectural inspirations, highlighting mid-twentieth century examples. Greek State television featured the exhibit, which is attracting a younger and broader Greek audience.

### ***STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: Advance Sustainable Development and Global Interests***

#### **INDIAN MADRASSA EDUCATORS PARTICIPATE IN IV ALUMNI CONVENTION**

PAS India organized the "Madrassa Educators Alumni Conference," July 12 through 14, convening 50 Madrassa educators, including IV Leadership Program alumni of the 2003 program "Religious Schools in the U.S." as well as participants in an upcoming fall 2004 IV program. Representing the major denominations of Islam, the Muslim religious leaders, discussed key issues with embassy officials, including the relationship between the U.S. and Muslim communities, the need for reform in Madrassas, and the nature of Islam in India. Professors and administrators from universities throughout India emphasized the need to address contemporary educational and societal needs.

## **II. Partnerships for Learning (P4L): Working Together for the Successor Generation**

*Strategic Objective: PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING*

### **YOUTH EXCHANGES MAKE NEWS IN U.S. AND ABROAD**

ECA youth exchange programs continue to draw U.S. and international media attention, particularly with the recent culmination of the YES program's inaugural year. "Student exchange program helps break down cultural barriers," an article in the Lebanese *Daily Star* (July 15, 2004), featured a YES student from Lebanon who lived in the state of Washington during the 2004–2005 academic year ([http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_ID=1&article\\_ID=6266&categ\\_id=1](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_ID=1&article_ID=6266&categ_id=1)). The article "Few U.S. Hosts Welcome Muslims" in the *Tampa Tribune* (July 18, 2004) also featured the YES program, describing several students' program experiences along with comments from ECA Director of Youth Programs **Robert Persiko** (<http://tampatrib.com/FloridaMetro/MGBGJ21LSWD.html>). Other ECA youth exchanges continue to grab headlines, including a program that brought 18 Muslim youth to the United States to learn about American society and culture. The London-based *Financial Times* (July 20, 2004), in the story "Middle America meets the Middle East in a battle for hearts and minds," reports on the exchange, including remarks from participants and comments from Assistant Secretary **Patricia Harrison**, who emphasizes the need to reach beyond elites to connect with youth influencers.

### **2004-2005 YES STUDENTS ATTEND KARACHI PRE-DEPARTURE BRIEFING**

On July 17, twenty-seven high school students from Karachi and its environs met with



PAO **Rex Moser** for a pre-departure briefing to prepare for their experiences in the United States as Partnerships for Learning Youth Exchange and Study (P4L-YES) program participants. Moser addressed many concerns raised by the anxious students, who will live with families and study in American high schools for the 2004-2005 school year.

**Karachi PAO Rex Moser presents a pre-departure briefing for outbound YES students, July 17, 2004.**

***Strategic Objective: ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL INTERESTS***

**PAKISTAN CELEBRATES 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING ASSOCIATION**

The Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) celebrated its 20th anniversary on June 17 with a digital videoconference (DVC) held at the Karachi Consul General's residence. The DVC featured a lively exchange between an audience of 45 university and high school English teachers and **Dr. Jodi Crandall**, Professor of Education and Director of the interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in Language, Literacy, and Culture at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Dr. Crandall spoke about the teaching profession and described new teaching strategies. SPELT is Pakistan's only association of language teachers. The conference provided the opportunity to assist teachers in improving their English language curricula and classroom skills.



**Panelists and an audience of Pakistani educators engage U.S. language professor Dr. Jodi Crandall during a DVC in Karachi on July 17, 2004.**

**NIGERIAN YOUTH BENEFIT FROM ECA EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

On July 20, the Public Affairs Section (PAS) in Abuja conducted a pre-departure orientation for 16 Nigerian high school students and two teachers who will soon depart for Iowa to participate in the P4L YES Program. PAS staff, program coordinators, and exchange program alumni offered the students tips on traveling, living and studying in the United States. At the end of the program, U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria **John Campbell** spoke with the students about their unique opportunity. The education reporter of the *New Nigerian Newspaper* covered the event.



**Senegalese English language teachers pose with Professor Martha Nyikos (second from left) during an American Center Summer Institute session, July 2004.**

**BOND WITH SPECIALIST ENHANCES PROGRAM FOR SENEGALESE ENGLISH TEACHERS**

Following their training program with Professor **Martha Nyikos** of Indiana University, July 5 to 16, twenty Senegalese participants of the American Center Summer Institute have demonstrated enormous progress and have expressed profound appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the program. All English teachers in Islamic schools, the twenty learned how to make classes more interactive, use the Internet to find educational materials, and enhance their English language teaching with American Studies lessons. The quality of

participants' work and their ease with English increased dramatically as a result of Professor Nyikos "teaching from her heart," as participants put it.

### **FLEX EXPERIENCE EMPOWERS DISABLED RUSSIAN STUDENT**

Russian student **Misha Chudotvorov**, who has cerebral palsy and astigmatic myopia, spoke to American Councils staff in St. Petersburg, Russia, on June 28 about his experience as a participant in the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program. Staff could hardly believe that Chudotvorov was the same shy young man who had left St. Petersburg in July 2003. One staff member reports, "Besides looking older, he was overflowing with excitement about America, about his English (which was quite poor when he left), about his teachers that he became very close to. He speaks openly and projects an adult confidence." Chudotvorov described how his plans had changed as a result of his year in the United States, including pursuing a degree in business management at the Polytech rather than attending the physical education institute. Chudotvorov is also making an extraordinary effort to get a job to help support his single mother who earns \$200 a month. An American Councils representative notes, "The idea of Misha supporting his mother, when he was so dependent on her before [is very] surprising. It's when you see how the participants change...that you realize what a powerful experience this program provides."

### **III. Program Alumni Magnifying U.S. Public Diplomacy**

*Strategic Objective: PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING*

#### **FULBRIGHTER ELECTED PRESIDENT OF PANAMA'S TOP NEWSPAPER**

The board of directors at *La Prensa*, Panama's leading daily and most influential newspaper, unanimously elected former Fulbright grantee **Fernando Berguido** as its president. Berguido, who is president of Transparency International, Panama and founder of Castro & Berguido Law Firm, earned his LL.M. at UCLA in 1987.

#### **IV PROGRAM HAS POSITIVE IMPACT ON VIETNAMESE ALUMNA**

Former International Visitor **Dr. Tran Thi Thu Hien** is visiting private and public institutions in an effort to address Vietnam's need for a coordinated, integrated approach to rural medicine and preventive health care. In her most recent visit to the Vietnam branch of World Concern, a worldwide Christian charitable organization, she presented a PowerPoint presentation on her March 27 to April 24 IV program "Rural Medicine and Preventive Health Care. Among other topics, Dr. Hien described American culture and government as well the U.S. free market economy. On concluding her presentation, she said, "this is a wonderful experience...the impressions and discoveries are so rich that [they] can be absorbed and reflected over [a] long time, in the work and life of mine, and perhaps of many others with whom I can share."

*Strategic Objective: ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL INTERESTS*

#### **U.S. FULBRIGHTER IN KOSOVO CONTRIBUTES TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION**

Recently returned U.S. Fulbright Scholar Anne E. Brisson has been invited by the University of Pristina to return to Kosovo in November 2004 to continue her research on "Kosovo Attitudes about Drugs and HIV/AIDS" and teach a masters seminar on



HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. Her 2003-2004 ethnographic research project examined substance abuse among young people in the context of the 1999 war, concluding that effective prevention efforts among young people and the general public hinge on community-based services to users and their families. With colleagues from the University of Illinois, Chicago and the Kosovo Ministry of Health, Brisson is also writing a joint research proposal that will improve communication between parents and youth in Kosovo with regard to risky behavior involving HIV/AIDS and drugs. Ms. Brisson comments, "The Fulbright award gave me the flexibility to develop new programs, make new connections, and further collaboration between U.S. and Kosovar policy-makers; I also established some life-long friendships. Many thanks to all who made this possible."



**2003-2004 U.S. Fulbright Scholar in Kosovo  
Anne Brisson (front row, white jacket) engages with Kosovars during her visit to research substance abuse issues at the University of Pristina.**

### **BLIND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES PROGRAM ALUMNUS CONDUCTS COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY SEMINAR FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED IN VLADIVOSTOK**

Contemporary Issues program alumnus **Alexander Gritzai** of Russia organized a June 21 seminar in Vladivostok to introduce the latest computer technologies available to the blind. An employee of the Primorskiy Kray Library for the Blind, Gritzai received an ECA-funded, IREX-administered alumni small grant to organize the seminar in an effort to develop more equal treatment of the blind in the Russian Far East. Over 30 professionals who work with people with disabilities, as well as visually impaired participants from across the Russian Far East participated in the seminar. Project Harmony provided technical support through its special IATP center for the disabled, located at the Library for the Blind. OTV Prim, a regional TV station with over 1,150,000 viewers, covered the event.

### **FORMER IV DEFENDS HUMAN RIGHTS IN VENEZUELA**

While **Carlos Nieto** has been targeted as a traitor by Venezuelan authorities for accepting program funding from U.S. agencies, he remains committed to defending political and human rights. Nieto's participation in a 2003 IV Leadership program on "Human Rights and Prison Reform" has enabled him to establish valuable contacts with U.S. agencies and advance his work for conflict resolution, respect for human rights, and prison reform in Venezuela. Nieto reports the program "is a wonderful experience that taught me that men and women deprived of their freedom can still lead a honorable life and that devotion to work, organization and planning are essential and something worth imitating." Following his program, Nieto wrote the article "Carceles Gringas" that was published in Venezuela's main, central and regional dailies.